THE MAGAZINE OF THE NATIONAL SPASTICS SOCIETY

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SPASTICS NEWS

NATIONAL SPASTICS SOCIETY

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12 PARK CRESCENT
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Telephone: MUSeum 5020

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COMMENT

THE RIGHT TO WORK

The majority of us take for granted our right to work and to earn our living, and lucky people with regular jobs do not often reflect why work is so vitally important or how they would feel if they were to be denied this right.

Yet many of the older spastics in Britain today *were* denied the right to become independent and to earn their living, and to them and to the boys and girls now leaving school work represents more than just a means to earn a wage to keep themselves and their families. Having a job represents normal life to these young people and what they crave more than anything else is to be like other people and to be accepted by them—not as objects of pity, but for the sake of their self respect.

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Editor: G. Paton

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FRONT COVER

FIRST visitor to the National Spastics Society's stand at the "Do-It-Yourself" Exhibition, Olympia, was lovely actress Hy Hazell, who is currently having a great success in the London West End show, "Lock Up Your Daughters".

Our picture shows her sharing a joke with pretty 17-year-old Ann Linton, a young spastic girl who works at 12 Park Crescent and who was among those making jewellery on our stand at the exhibition.

Our Employment Department

SPASTICS at work

PROVIDES A CHANCE TO WORK

Life that is all leisure-time soon becomes an endless bore, and, with no future in view, any youngster quickly becomes demoralised and disillusioned. It was to provide a brighter future and an opportunity to work—at the highest level possible for each young spastic—that the National Spastics Society set up its Employment Department in October, 1957.

The Employment Department has done much in its five years of existence to bring happiness and a sense of belonging to hundreds of young spastic men and women. How is this achieved? What are the processes which bring a spastic to his or her rightful place in modern society?

To illustrate we will take two fictitious people, Joan and David, and follow them from their early days of frustration and despair.

It was on a Further Education Course, such as that seen above, that our fictitious spastic lad, David, found the encouragement and training which led him to independence

BORN TOO SOON

JOAN, a spastic paraplegic, was "born too soon"—or so it seemed to her when she saw the new school being built for physically handicapped children and heard of all the special facilities they were to have. Her own schooling during the war years had been very spasmodic: the effort to keep up with the other children at the local secondary school had not been too successful, especially as she had had long periods in hospital. She had left school at 15 and had been at home ever since, doing the odd piece of embroidery and helping as far as she could with the household chores.

Because walking was difficult and the family had no car, Joan rarely went out, so that the social evening organised each month by the local spastics group was the only opportunity she had for meeting new friends. She had never signed on at the Labour Exchange: as far as she knew the only training facilities were for the war disabled and it seemed unlikely that she would be able to compete with people who had had previous working experience.

A Special Course

The turning point in her life came when she read the articles in SPASTICS NEWS about Assessment and Further Education Courses for young school leavers. She asked the secretary of the local group why nothing was being done for the older age group. A letter to Park Crescent resulted in a visit from the Advisory Officer of the Employment Department who said that plans were in hand for a special course for this age group and suggested that Joan should join it.

When it came to the point of actually going away for a fortnight, Joan was more than a little apprehensive. Would there be people there to help with the personal care she needed? What was all this about discussions and factory visits? Was the standard going to be much higher than she could reach? These and other questions raced through her mind.

Reassured on all counts, but still very apprehensive, Joan arrived at the Course to spend a fortnight away from her family for the first time in her life. She found herself being asked to *give* help as well as receiving it herself. Practical work, impromptu speaking, social activities—all the phases she had read about in the articles, and here she was in the thick of it! She was surprised that some, more handicapped than she, were in fact quicker on a lot of the work; but she came into her own when she tried jewellery-making. Her patience and her quick eye for colour were great assets on the work. In addition she found that although she disliked work with machinery, she was nimble fingered and could manage some of the assembly work at a fair speed.

A Possible for Birmingham

At her interview with a member of the Employment Department staff at the end of the course, Joan talked about her anxiety for her future when her parents were no longer able to look after her. For the time being she was quite happy to remain at home, especially if she could join the Homeworker's Scheme on jewellery-making. It was obvious that she would not be able to cope with a job in normal industry, but she might certainly manage the Sheltered Workshop when this eventually opens in Birmingham.

So Joan's future, with her thankful co-operation, was quietly and methodically considered. Meanwhile she had made close friends with the girls in her room at the course and all three decided to book a holiday at the Arundel Hotel next year. Although none of them could really manage all her own personal care, with the help of the other two each could get around all the difficulties.

For Joan the future was now bright. She had prospects of independence; she had friends; and she had the backing of competent people to whom she was a *person who mattered.*

HE LACKED CONFIDENCE

David, a spastic right hemiplegic, took another road to independence. For ten years he attended a day school for the physically handicapped. His two older brothers were working and he too was keen to settle into a job when he left school, but he was still rather immature and lacking in confidence.

When he turned 15 however, his headmaster, knowing that competition with non-handicapped school leavers for local employment would be keen, and anxious for the plans for David's future to be formulated, wrote to the N.S.S. Employment Department to see what could be done.

This letter brought immediate action. Along to the school went Mrs. Wynn, the N.S.S. Careers Officer, to see David who came to the interview accompanied by his mother. Then Mrs. Wynn telephoned the Youth Employment Officer and arrangements were made for David to talk over the recommendations for his future with this official during the school holidays.

Preparation for Industry

Everyone agreed that a six-month course of Further Education would help David, who had never been away from home and who had very little opportunity of trying out practical work at school. It was hoped that after this course he would then be ready for industrial training. His parents and the Youth Employment Officer agreed that this break would help the boy to stand on his own feet and that extended education would help to bring his attainments up to a reasonable standard.

So David joined a Further Education Course with 20 other young people and was encouraged to become more independent and to make his own decisions. He made quite good progress on the educational side. He became much more self-confident through his wider experience of the various practical and social activities. He did especially well on the work involving machinery and tools and although he was rather slow he became very enthusiastic about taking further industrial training.

At the end of the Course, David was seen again by the Careers Officer, who recommended he should apply for training at "Sherrards". A letter went off to the local Y.E.O. who arranged for the boy's application to go forward to the Ministry of Labour.

A short time later he was called for interview with the Sherrards Selection Panel and accepted on to the waiting list. As there was some delay before he could be offered a vacancy, he worked for three days a week at a Centre run by his Local Group. This experience helped him considerably and he became accustomed to work routine and to discipline.

And so to a Job

Life now looked good to David and even better when finally his turn came round for Sherrards where he trained for a year on all kinds of machinery, assembly and inspection work under qualified instructors. His progress through the training period was watched closely by Mr. Allman, the N.S.S. Assistant Employment Officer, and when it was felt that the young man was ready for employment Mr. Allman contacted the Ministry of Labour (as David was now over 18 years) to look into the possibilities of local employment. Mr. Allman and the local Disablement Resettlement Officer contacted a number of firms and David was eventually placed in employment as a capstan lathe operator.

It took the young man a little while to settle down, but it is now a new David who leaves home each morning for a job in which he is quite happy and in which his firm are satisfied with his progress.

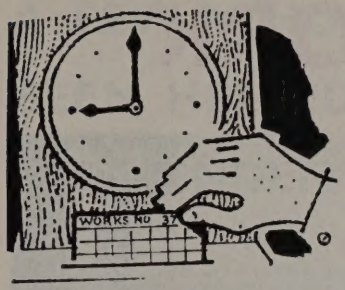
"RIGHT FOR THE JOB"

Mr. Brian Connell, the well-known television personality, has made a new film in conjunction with the N.S.S. in which he looks at the work of our Employment Department.

The film, "Right for the Job", in full colour and sound, shows how spastics are assessed and trained by the Society and will be of special interest to employers, businessmen, Rotary clubs, etc.

Copies of this film — made by Libertas Film Productions (London) Ltd. — and further details are available from:—

National Spastics Society
12 Park Crescent
London, W.1



The following Employment news for this month shows some interesting "postings", and the Homeworkers' Scheme has enrolled a number of new jewellery makers to help in building up stocks for the rush of Christmas orders:—

Paul Trischler, from **Eastcote,** after attending the last Further Education Course at Bexhill, is now working for a trial period with a firm in Uxbridge.

Margaret Turner, from **St. Austell,** is working as a power press operator for a firm in Streatham, following her training at Sherrards.

Christine Walton, from **Holme Firth,** nr. Huddersfield, after training at the William Turner Centre, Stockport, has commenced employment as a stock clerk with a manufacturing concern in Meltham.

Sheila Bennett, from **Wallasey,** has changed her job from Tickopres operator to that of a Hollerith punch operator following a course of training.

Mary Hallett, from **Dorchester,** is employed by a local firm after completing her training at the William Turner Centre, Stockport.

Anne Holdham, from **Croydon,** following her training at Queen Elizabeth's College, Leatherhead, is employed as a clerk at the enquiry desk of the local borough council offices.

Maureen Moore, from **Twickenham,** has commenced employment with Electronics Ltd. in Richmond. She is working on the inspection side.

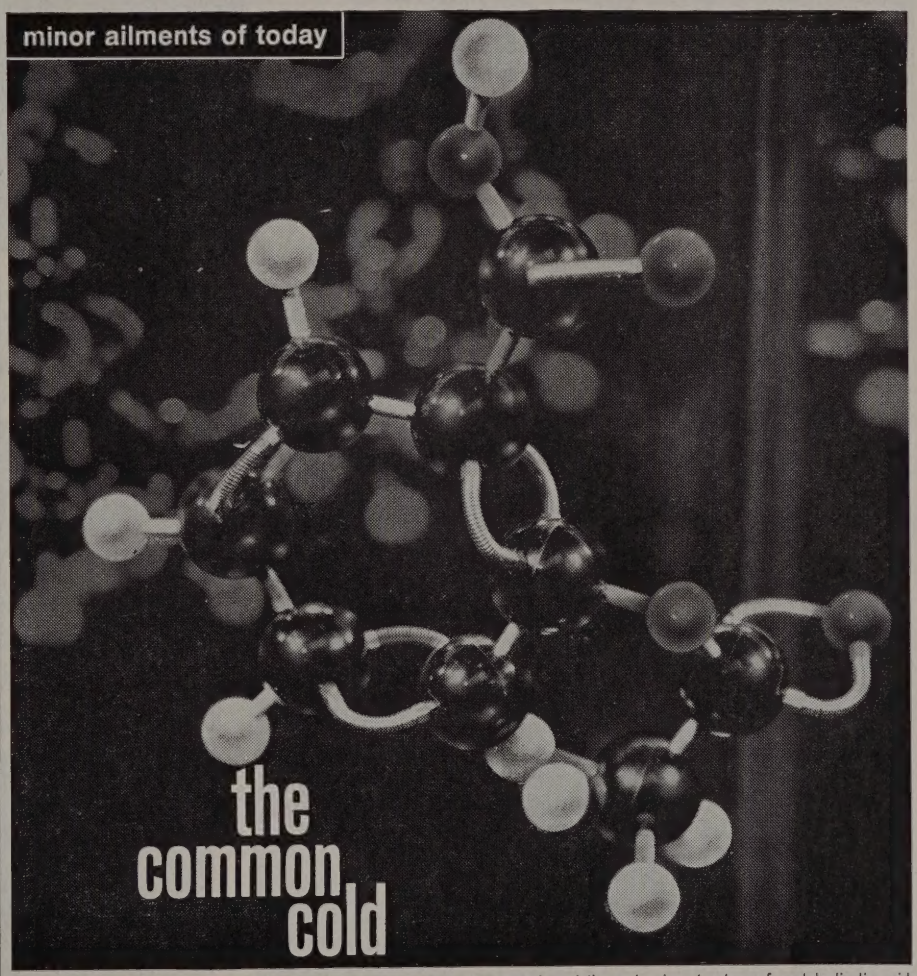
Michael O'Loughlin, from **Tooting,** has found employment as an assistant chef at St. James's Hospital, Balham.

Phillippa Smith, from **Brentwood,** has commenced work as a filing clerk and general office duties for a trial period with a firm of catering equipment manufacturers.

David Vicar, from **North Shields,** is working as a cleaner at the offices of the Ministry of Pensions and National Insurance in Newcastle whilst awaiting a vacancy at Sherrards.

The Homeworkers' Scheme has enrolled the following new members:—

Michael Blandford, Robert Brewster, Carol Cooper, Peter Clifford, Edith Dickinson, D. Telford Evans, Miss M. J. Ford, Doreen Gibbons, Ian Graham, Maureen Green, Miss Hoskin, Patricia Hulme, Freda Johnson, Iona Jones, Robert Laire, Shirley McMahon, Kathleen Murphy, Audrey Murr, James Newman, Derek Parker, Margaret Penrose, Celia Raone, Mary Sellars, Neil Sillitoe, Peggy Spenser, Victor Stringfellow, Michael Tresadern, Graham Tuck, Marjorie Walker, Mavis Welsford, June White, Margaret Wilson, John Woodcock, James Yeats.



This illustration is a spatial representation of the molecular structure of acetylsalicylic acid

The common cold has uncommon cunning, for it has outwitted the efforts of twenty years' intensive research work to defeat it. But at least we know the enemy far better to-day than we did even a few short years ago. We know the common cold is caused by a virus, while most of the symptoms—feverishness, running nose, sore throat, stuffiness—follow up the virus itself. We know that infection is carried in the air, and so coughs and sneezes really do spread it. We know that children between 2 and 5 are specially prone to colds. And that getting cold has nothing to do with catching cold. We do not know a precise remedy for the cold virus itself. Meanwhile, there is nothing better than acetylsalicylic acid for treating the symptoms of a cold—so the millions of people who take 'ASPRO' are not only taking the right medicine for their cold but they are also sparing the Doctor's time for those with more serious complaints.

A NICHOLAS PRODUCT

SPASTICS AT WORK

THE PROBLEM

In Britain to-day there are over 70,000 spastics. What does "spastic" mean? It is a word for people who are handicapped by a muscle disorder originating in brain damage very early in life. Some spastics are so little affected that their acquaintances are scarcely aware of their handicap; they can take jobs and earn their living like anyone else. Others suffer more seriously and may be clumsy, lame, deaf, or even mentally damaged.

WHAT CAN BE DONE

Even the lightly handicapped may need help to make a start in a job or profession. But who will help those who have no use in hands or feet, or cannot hear or speak?

There is plenty of work for the majority of spastics, even the most seriously handicapped; but finding them the right job needs special care. They *must* have sympathy and help from an effective nation-wide organisation which really knows the field.

WHAT THE N.S.S. IS DOING

Over a thousand spastic boys and girls reach working age each year. Special officers of the Ministry of Labour and Youth Employment Service can help the luckier ones. But the N.S.S. is there to help the less fortunate. Since 1957, when the Society set up its Employment Department, hundreds of spastics have been helped into full-time jobs in open industry.

Vocational assessment courses and training centres are run by the Society to fit spastics to overcome their handicaps. Big new projects are in hand to extend the Sheltered Workshops and special work centres all over the country; and scores of spastics are being helped to do profitable work in their homes through the Society's Homework Scheme.

HOW *YOU* CAN HELP:—

—At your work

By accepting handicapped spastic men and women as workmates.

Give them a chance!

—As an employer

When you have a suitable vacancy, let a spastic worker have a trial. *Your* patience and *his* determination will give him a chance in life.

Give them a chance!

GIVE THEM A CHANCE!

Seriously handicapped spastics are working today as clerks, typists, in the Civil Service, and in a variety of professional posts. Some are working as telephone operators, gardeners, warehousemen, comptometer operators, in catering and domestic work, or as book-keepers and lift attendants. Others are working in nationalised industries. Some have their own small businesses.

BUT MANY OTHERS STILL HAVE NO JOBS . . .

Please help these handicapped people to a happier, more useful life by sending a donation to the National Spastics Society, 12, Park Crescent, London, W.1.

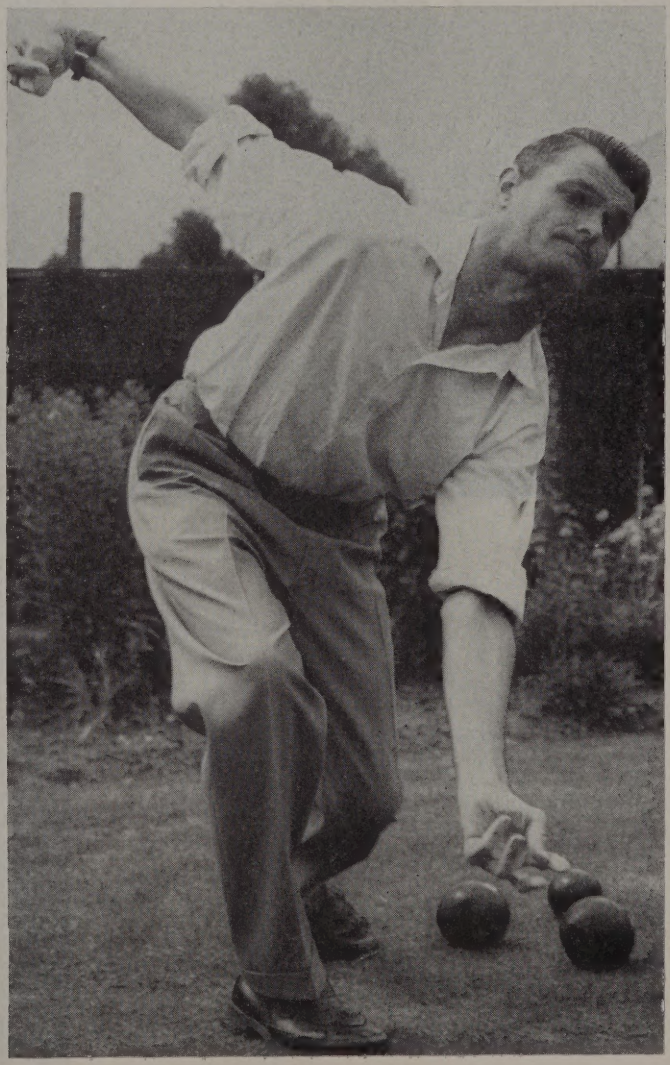
THE N.S.S. NEEDS FUNDS

to continue its work for spastics

A FEW WHO HAVE BEEN HELPED TO INDEPENDENCE

Printing is now a worthwhile business for 21-year-old Wendy Robbins **(above)** *of Reading; while* **(below)** *36-year-old P. Trevor C. Price, of Prescot, Lancashire, finds time both for sport and for his studies for a Fellowship in Accountancy*

Lawrence Scott **(above)**, *a 26-year-old spastic from Bournemouth, was helped to set up his own workshop and today turns out a wide variety of basketry. Welsh wools and crafts are the speciality of 39-year-old Glanville David of Penygraig, in the Rhondda Valley* **(below)**



A DAY ON AN ADVENTURE ASSESSMENT COURSE

A new day dawns at Irton Hall and another Assessment Course is under way. Joe King and Clifford Lewis **(above)** *get some practical experience in domesticity by making their own beds—a must for all students. After braakfast some of the students* **(left)** *settle down to making artificial jewellery, supervised by Mrs. Allman. Each day at least an hour was spent doing various types of practical work*

(Right)—*Coffee Break, a most essential part of the programme! This was always served and cleared away by the students. Here we see Mary Walker from Preston dispensing "elevenses"*

Dr. Martin Bax, assistant editor "Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology", second from right in the picture, joined this assessment course during the second week and is seen giving instruction in the use of hand tools to a group of students. They appear to be enjoying it too

Discussions on a variety of subjects are always held during the courses and in this one **(right)** *Miss Tristram is talking over with the students the visits they had made to local factories, including the Atomic Power Station at Calder Hall, Quaker Oats Ltd., Kangol Wear*

Social activities are also a very popular feature of the programme. This course started with one boy being proficient in "The Twist". It ended with most of the students and members of the staff being able to keep going! Here we see Roger Yerbury at the piano and Ann O'Brien, Barry Wensley and Barbara Gornall "getting with it"

COUNTRY WIDE

Coins in the Fountain

The celebrated Rome fountain, which is a must for all coin-throwing tourists, has a Skegness equivalent in the garden of one of South Parade's private hotels, the Greystones Hotel. It exists for one purpose only—to provide money for the spastic children of Barnsley. Every night the proprietor, Mrs. Edith L. Walton, takes time off from her hotel duties to scoop the coins from the fountain.

Lovely girls, lovely smiles and a lovely cheque—this was the garden scene at Greystones Private Hotel when two of Janice Sutton's Lovelies, who are appearing at a local theatre, handed over to Mr. G. H. Walton a cheque for £50, money collected in the fountain. Also in the picture is Mr. R. E. Walton

The fountain was built into the garden at Easter and to date has realised £50. "The best day we have had yet," says Mrs. Walton, "was Whit Sunday when we collected about seven guineas. People really enjoy throwing their coins in: on one occasion we counted 18 queueing up!"

A cheque for £50 was recently presented to Mrs. Walton's brother-in-law, Mr. Geoffrey Walton, who is Projects Secretary for the Barnsley and District Association of the National Spastics Society. The money goes to Barnsley because Mrs. Walton and her husband, Mr. R. E. Walton, lived in that town for many years and it was from there they came to Skegness.

In a letter thanking Mr. and Mrs. Walton, the residents of the hotel and the many passing holiday-makers who have contributed to the sum collected so far, the Barnsley committee say: "This money will help provide treatment for the spastics attending the new day nursery Welfare Centre in Barnsley."

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

Readers are requested to note that four of the Regional Officers have now changed their addresses:

Welsh Regional Officer:

Mr. Kingsley-Davies is now located at 2 Saunders Road, Cardiff. His new telephone number will be advised later.

North-Eastern Regional Officer:

Mr. Whyte has moved to Royal Chambers, Station Parade, Harrogate. His telephone number is Harrogate 69655.

Northern Home Counties Regional Officer:

Mr. Lemarie has moved to the new Watford Centre at 524 St. Alban's Road, North Watford. His telephone number remains Watford 41565:

Eastern Regional Officer:

Mr. Knight has moved to 28 Priestgate, Peterborough. His telephone number remains Peterborough 67045.

A push from Mr. Acker Bilk—and another pile of pennies is on its way to help spastics. The jazz musician performed the ceremony at the Crows Nest Hotel, Cleethorpes

A New Way to Collect Money for Spastics

A novel idea for collecting money for spastics has been thought up by customers of the Ely Inn, Wroughton, Wiltshire. They use beer to stick coins on a three-foot by two-foot rectangular mirror. To date over £4 in coins has been stuck on the mirror surface.

Mr. Bob Duncan, a patron of the inn, was the first to stick a coin on the mirror at Christmas. Since then his penny has been joined by other pennies, sixpences and half-crowns.

Mrs. Irene Jewell, wife of the licensee, is amazed at the incredible way the coins stay stuck to the mirror which hangs above the fireplace in the bar. But they do, and no doubt when the coins have been collected the mirror's surface will not remain clear for long. An idea we would like to see copied by inns all over the country

(Picture by courtesy Wiltshire Newspapers Ltd., Swindon)

No wonder there are big smiles from everyone in this photograph, for it was taken at a garden party, held by Sale, Altrincham and District Spastics Society, which realised over £700. In the picture with Mrs. L. Stockdale, the Chairman, is disc jockey Jimmy Saville

(Pic. by courtesy of The Watford Post)

The match is over and now it's time for refreshments in Woodside Stadium restaurant. It's also time for a presentation to be made to the Mayoress by pretty 21-year-old spastic, Miss Julia Payne, of West Watford, after the Mayor had welcomed the visitors from Bristol (see below)

More Help from R.P.P.

The Oliver Goodwin All Stars XI, nearly all staff members of Regional Pool Promotions who voluntarily give their spare time to play football and cricket to raise funds for local deserving causes, journeyed to Watford last month and helped raise £64 for the Watford Treatment Centre for Spastics. Nearly 1,000 spectators went along to Woodside Stadium to watch the Bristol team beat a local team from Savage and Parsons (engineers) by three goals to two. Tottenham Hotspur's full-back, Ron Henry, kicked off.

A spokesman for R.P.P. says that they have had tentative enquiries for away fixtures at Barnstable, Salisbury, Ilford, Southampton and St. Austell. A note has gone out to R.P.P. supervisors to say that fixtures can only be entertained on Sundays and grounds should be within four hours coach run from Bristol, since some of the staff have to start work at 7 a.m. Mondays.

Generous Norwich

Coppers and silver to the tune of £450 dropped merrily into the boxes of Norfolk and Norwich Spastic Association during the carnival procession through Norwich a few weeks ago. Next time the committee holds a carnival, however, Mr. Jack Woods, honorary secretary of the Association's organising committee, proposes to organise additional collectors into "flying squad commandoes" to penetrate where crowds are thickest.

Town and Village Scheme

We hear from Capt. C. S. B. Swinley, Hampshire Town and Village Organiser, that the scheme is going well and the number of representatives has now reached 142. Efforts are being made to put Groups and Representatives in touch with each other. Arrangements are also being made to form Groups in Basingstoke and Winchester. The Mayor of Winchester has again lent Abbey House for a meeting on Tuesday, October 16.

Substantial Contributions from N.S.S.

In our articles last month covering the Bedford Centre extension opening and the proposed centre at Bromley, we inadvertently left out a note about the substantial help towards these two projects provided by the N.S.S. In the case of Bedford 100 per cent of the cost was met by the Society and in the case of Bromley the contribution was as high as 87 per cent.

NEW

Hooper-Seaco
HYDRAULIC unit
LIFT

This unit overcomes a great nursing problem of the disabled. It enables a patient who is ambulatory when standing to place himself in an upright position without aid and to adjust the seat at a suitable angle to rest comfortably when sitting. The movement is smooth and can be stopped immediately at any point in travel—up or down—an essential safety factor. Standard armchairs (fig. 2) in two shades of red, blue or green. Units (fig. 3) can be fitted to patients own armchair (fig. 1).

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News in brief

Feering:

Forty-six residents of Prested Hall Spastics Centre, Feering, were among the 300 guests at the reception which followed the wedding at All Saints' Church, Feering, of Mr. Michael Chesney Smith and Miss Janice M. Watson, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Watson—he is warden at Prested Hall—and a former member of the Social Workers Department at 12 Park Crescent. The bride, who was given away by her father, wore a dress of embossed satin with lily-of-the-valley design. She was attended by Miss Sue W. Purvis: the best man was Mr. J. W. Fiddler.

Charles Craig, the Covent Garden tenor, sang at the service which was conducted by the Bishop of Colchester and the Rev. Trevor Howard. The choir of St. John's Church, Peterborough, were in attendance under their choirmaster, Mr. Peter Watson, the bride's uncle.

Jersey:

Despite the rain, a garden fête held by the Jersey branch of the N.S.S. raised £889 which will go to the branch fund for providing a hydrotherapy pool at Ingfield Manor School. The fête was opened by Mr. Richard Hearne ("Mr. Pastry") who donated £50 from his own fund for spastics. He drove to the grounds of Samares Manor in an open car—ignoring the rain—and was escorted by the Band of the Island of Jersey and greeted by about 2,000 people. In the afternoon both Mr. Hearne and Miss Rosemary Squires signed autographs for a shilling each to aid spastics and they were later presented with shopping baskets made by spastics.

South East Surrey:

Down in South East Surrey "something's stirred"; and a great deal is going to be heard of that particular Group in the coming months! They recently bought a fountain and its first appearance realised a sum of £1 8s. 0d. Sheepdog trials combined with a flower show organised by the local Gardening Society at Norwood Hill realised over £50. Handcraft sales raised another £20.

WELL DONE, BOYS!

This month we are pleased to acknowledge the efforts of some youngsters in Hampshire and in Surrey who made good use of their summer holidays from school to help spastics.

THANKS go to 10-year-old Andrew Prince and to his seven-year-old brother, Graham, both of Ivy House, Ludgershall, Andover, Hants, who held a garden fête—showing great ingenuity with their side-shows—and who raised £4 for the N.S.S.

THANKS are also due to nine-year-old Clive Micklewright, of "Taoramina", 23 Hillcrest Avenue, Chertsey, Surrey, and to his friends, Lindsay Mathews and Michael Hall, who organised jumble sales in their front gardens and raised £13 for the White Lodge Centre for Spastics, newly-built in the grounds of Botley Park Hospital, Chertsey.

TRICYCLES FOR SPASTICS

ADULT MODEL

JUVENILE MODEL

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DO—IT—

The "Do-It-Yourself" theme on our stand embraced Christmas cards as well as jewellery. Here 22-year-old Dudley Virgo, of Bearsted, Kent, demonstrates the method of printing verses on the cards to Hy Hazell and to Mr. J. L. Kellett, Assistant Appeals Secretary, who is in charge of the Christmas cards programme

YOURSELF

SPASTICS ARE DOING IT! read the slogan on the wall.

"They most certainly are," said a delighted elderly lady as she left the National Spastics Society stand at the Do-It-Yourself Exhibition in the National Hall, Olympia, last month, wearing in her lapel a bright new piece of spastic-made jewellery and carrying in her hand a packet of 1962 Christmas cards.

At the time of going to press there was no doubt about the success of our busy stand at this Do-It-Yourself "shop window". Sales of jewellery, Christmas cards and handcrafts were averaging about £65 a day; and much of this success lies to the credit of the young

A customer makes her choice of Christmas cards at the stand and there to serve her was star David Jacobs. His presence boosted sales

spastic men and women who worked on the stand during the two weeks of the exhibition—people like 17-year-old Ann Linton of Ramsgate, 24-year-old Jean Ferrier of Fulham, 16-year-old Robert Neville of London, 22-year-old Dudley Virgo of Bearsted, Kent, residents from Coombe Farm and spastics who came from local centres. Members of local groups also rallied round and gave great assistance.

Our stand was also a focal point at the exhibition because of the top-line stars—members of the Stars Organisation for Spastics—who went along to help. On these pages you can see a few who "went behind the counter."

Film and TV star Paul Carpenter (left) was also impressed at the high standard of the spastic-made jewellery. "Did you really make that?" he asks Ann Linton. Mr. A. Scott, Homework and Display Supervisor, who was in charge of the stand, looks on with approval

ONCE BITTEN, TWICE SHY

by Dr. N. P. R. Clyde, Editor, Disabled Drivers Magazine

TO many of us who are confined to a wheel-chair, the bane of our existence can be a flight of steps or stairs: even a single step can be an insurmountable obstacle if it is too high.

When I recall the number of times I have sat in my wheel-chair at the bottom of the stairs wishing for some miracle that would transport me to the top, I blush with shame, for wishful thinking gets one no-where—certainly not to the top of a flight of stairs.

However difficult it may be getting up stairs in a wheel-chair, it can be even more tricky getting down not only stairs but even a slope in the path. I learned this quite early in my wheel-chair experience which now spans some 14 years.

My first experience came before I had left hospital to be let loose in the wide, wide world of mobile people. Those patients in the ward who could get about reasonably well were permitted to do so as long as they were in the ward when required and did not interfere with the day-to-day running of the various departments or obstruct any of the doorways. They were allowed to go outside if they wanted to in fine weather.

Indeed, they were encouraged to do this for the mere exercise of propelling oneself in a wheel-chair for shorter or longer distances has a remarkably good remedial effect: it strengthens those very muscles upon which the paraplegic patient will have to depend in the future besides being very good for morale because of the independence it brings. There was really no bar as to where we could go except the ardousness of having to go there under one's own steam, as it were, and of having to be back at the proper time.

Several patients had motor-cars which were adapted so as to be capable of being driven with hand-controls. Once one has become used to this type of control driving is really no more difficult than driving with conventional controls and the controls are just as reliable. Well, those who had such cars available were allowed to go home for the week-end if they could manage all that was required when one had to live in a wheel-chair in a house.

Wonderful Relief

It was wonderful training for the day when hospital treatment would no longer be required and one could return home rehabilitated as far as this was going to be possible. It was also a wonderful relief from the monotony of life in a hospital ward, confined in space, limited in outlook, and detached from the world outside as such a life necessarily is. Often I thought it was the means of keeping many a paraplegic patient on the correct side of mental normality, for being paralysed from the waist down and completely unable to walk or stand is no joke as most readers will appreciate. Such a calamity requires much fortitude on the part of the patient and much persistence on the part of the doctors and hospital staff if the patient is to become in any way adjusted to it.

Once I had rehabilitated myself to such an extent that I could be allowed home for an occasional week-end, and, of course, had learned to drive the car which by this time had been converted to hand-controls, I got into the habit of taking my *congé* from the ward immediately after breakfast on a Saturday and going home to my family, returning to the comradeship of the ward late on Sunday afternoon. My car was parked in the hospital car-park and I learned to trundle out to it in my wheel-chair, hoist myself into the driving seat, push the wheel-chair aside to wait my return (there was an unwritten rule that no chair left thus was ever touched or moved by anyone else), and drive off home for a glorious week-end with my wife and family. I used to leave the ward with a small attaché-case resting on my knees while my hands were fully engaged in propelling the chair and in keeping it on a straight path.

Unfortunately, the concrete path along which I had to travel to reach the car-park ended in quite a steep downward slope. It was steep enough to require the wheel-chair "driver" to maintain a firm grip on the hand-rims of his chair if it was not to run away with him. One could sustain a nasty burn of the hands if one tried to slow a fast-moving chair too quickly or too suddenly. Sometimes the forward pull on the arms was enough to make one lean forward just too much for it will be remembered that a paraplegic cannot brace himself back in his chair with his legs.

One day I left the ward on the way to the car with my small attaché-case resting securely on my knees. Securely, did I say? Well, not quite, for as soon as the chair began to gain momentum and speed on the terminal slope of the path, the case started to slip forward on my knees. Hastily I took one hand off the propelling rim to retrieve the case. Even during this very short period of time the chair began to gain speed and moreover, because I was now braking with only one hand, it slewed round to one side. Quickly I grabbed the other wheel-rim and tried to return the chair to its proper course only to find that my efforts made the chair slew round in the opposite direction and the case slipped further forward on my knees.

An Impassable Barrier!

This had only to be repeated a couple of times and the case was roughly deposited on the ground in front of me. There it acted like the buffers at a railway terminus. The small wheels in the front came up against an impassable barrier but, I, with no power in my legs to stop me, carried on. Fortunately, at the time of my leaving the chair, it was facing towards the edge of the path and I landed none too gently on the grass alongside. Luckily, no damage was done either to myself or to the chair which ran on gaily for several feet, but it did require two stalwart ward orderlies who heard my frantic calls for help, to lift me back into the chair so that I could continue my journey home.

After that experience I could no longer say that I had not been warned and I became very careful whenever I had to go down a slope in my wheel-chair.

Some years later, however, I was caught off my guard again. The first lesson had been forgotten to some extent at least. By this time I was fully employed in the North of England. My office was on the ground floor and, although

there were two small steps to the front door of the building, my employers had been very co-operative and had had a moveable wooden ramp made so that I could get inside easily. Once inside, I was on my own and did all my work unaided. I was allocated a parking-place very near to the front door and the porter used to watch out for me arriving in the morning when he would place the ramp in position and help me to get into my chair and into the building. Proceedings were reversed in the evening when it was time to go home.

I became quite expert at letting the chair "swoosh" down the ramp to draw up more or less at my waiting car a few yards away. I used to enjoy the sensation of going downhill quickly; it reminded me of the sensation I had had on the switch-back at a fair.

But, alas, my previous experience had been too readily forgotten. It was winter-time and had been snowing quite heavily all day. As I steadied myself at the top of the ramp, I imagined the tracks I would make in the snow below; would it be a double track or a single? How far would I go into the snow before drawing up? I was fascinated by the scene below me. How pure is the whiteness of unbroken snow. A breath or two to get used to the colder air, and off I went, down, down, down. Would I travel two yards or three? Would I reach the car?

In the event I did neither. The snow was deeper than it looked and, as the small leading wheels came up against it, the chair was brought to a sudden halt. As before, I carried on, describing a neat parabola in space to land face down and arms akimbo spreadeagled in the snow. Again I was lucky and sustained no injury—no bruises, no broken spectacles, no broken nose as I "bit the snow", not the dust, for there was none. Actually, I did take a mouthful of it for it was clean and white and very refreshing after a hard day's work at a desk in an over-heated office.

Very, Very Careful

Nowadays it is not a case of once bitten, twice shy. I've been bitten twice and, believe me, I am very, very careful whenever I have to go down any slope in my wheel-chair. I try to assess the position carefully before I loose the brake on the chair. I try to look further ahead than I intend to travel, to make sure that there are no dangerous spots on which I might fall. I make absolutely sure that anything I might be carrying cannot slip off my knees (generally, I wedge it behind me or at the side), and I make quite sure that I am wearing a pair of leather gloves so that I can really grip the hand-rims without fear of burning my hands.

You see, where I live there are no strong men who could lift me back into my chair: if I were to fall out I might have to lie there for many hours before someone strong enough to lift me could be found. That could be all night, for my home is far out in the country and I am surrounded by elderly persons, none of whom I would allow to attempt to lift me. If I did it might well be a last act of kindness. No, I couldn't allow that.

"Once bitten, twice shy", goes the old adage, but when one has been bitten twice already, it behoves one to be shy for ever afterwards and to take special care, for the third bite might easily be fatal—to someone.

(Dr. Clyde was at one time a well-known rugby player and he also captained the Glasgow University golf team which won the McNeal Trophy, competed for by all Scottish universities. He served as a doctor in the R.A.F. before disablement overtook him.)

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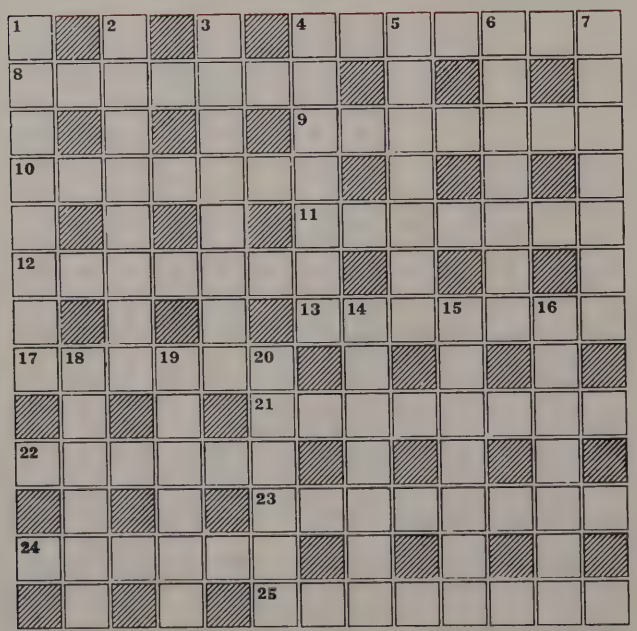

ACROSS

4. Greeting curtailed yet remaining whole. 7.
8. "Yon crib." anag. 7.
9. Pushed around like 16th century English monks perhaps. 7.
10. State vested in a huntress. 7.
11. The bare essential to remain alive. 7.
12. Quavering of a distorted elm-root. 7.
13. "Where fathom-line could never touch the ground,
And pluck up . . honour by the locks." Henry IV. Pt.1 7.
17. Pacific island of eggs. 6.
21. Beast advises an insect to marry in haste. 8.
22. Burnt a headcloth as it were. 6.
23. An unfair disadvantage for a girl? 4, 4.
24. Tailor-made bridge. 6.
25. "And proud his . . ' orders to perform,
Rides in the whirlwind and directs the storm." A. Pope. 8.

DOWN

1. Sailors in the "drink"! 8.
2. Aids to navigation particularly inland. 8.
3. Honour-bound not to emulate Houdini. 2, 6.
4. The glory has departed. 7.
5. Tinfish! 7.
6. Gin lets one really shine. 7.
7. She's a fit consort for Kruschev. 7.
14. Apparati of cross words? 7.
15. He makes it impossible to back a winner. 7.
16. The dead men of the party so to speak. 7.
18. A pilau from part of Italy. 6.
19. First Capulet casualty. 6.
20. Novel screen harvest. 6.

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Solution to September Crossword

ACROSS		DOWN	
1. Unscrupulous	19. Reincarnation	1. Urban	7. Stay	20. Comb
8. Bhang	20. Capri	2. Shady	11. Decay	21. Pater
9. Abbot	23. Hamster	3. Rigid	13. Omega	22. Items
10. Idiom	27. Thyme	4. Paris	14. Abner	23. Hyena
12. Noyades	28. Mitre	5. Llama	16. Rates	24. Medoc
15. Array	29. Druid	6. Umber	17. Anode	25. Truce
	30. Crystal Clear		18. Annam	26. Rider

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Ipswich and East Suffolk Spastics Soc. **T**
Leicester and Leicestershire Spastics Society **TE**
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Northampton and County Spastics Society **TE**
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Scunthorpe and District Spastic Society **C**
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Coventry and District Spastics Society **R**
Dudley and District Spastic Group **O**
North Staffordshire Spastic Association **T**
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Worcester and District Branch of NSS
(Officer to be appointed)

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North-West Surrey Group **TE**
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